ECP 2008 DILI 558001

Europeana v1.0

Europeana Policy on User-generated Content

Deliverable number	*D1.4*
Dissemination level	*Public*
Delivery date	*1 November 2010*
Status	*Final*
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[1] OJ L 79, 24.3.2005, p. 1.

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PREAMBLE

This policy document outlines the general policies of Europeana with regard to contributions by its users. While Europeana's primary objective is to make Europe's cultural heritage accessible to Internet users in structured way, Europeana is not only limited to incorporating and managing content contributed by its institutional partners across Europe. Europeana will complement the content provided by institutions with appropriate contributions by its end users while encouraging Internet users to help organise, annotate and otherwise enrich the metadata provided through Europeana.

This policy document clarifies the principles that concern all contributors to Europeana: Users, data providers and the Europeana Foundation and aims to establish how Europeana will deal with user contributed objects and metadata. In addition this policy also outlines the responsibilities of users wishing to contribute to Europeana. The terms of use that users contributing content to Europeana will have to agree to, will be detailed separately.

It needs to be noted that Introducing user contributions in Europeana, fits into the wider notion of 'participatory culture'. All over the globe, GLAMs (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museum) are currently investigating how this notion affects their workflows and services. This is still very much work in progress. Europeana will continuously need to assess the impact of UGC on its services and as a result continuously evaluate its user contributed content policy.

1. CONTEXT: THE IMPORTANCE OF USER CONTRIBUTIONS FOR EUROPEANA

Europeana provides access to millions of objects from Europe's museums, libraries, archives, and audiovisual archives through one common access point. In July 2010, the number of objects surpassed the 10 million mark, contributed by over 1,000 organisations. Typically, the objects contributed by data providers have been collected over many decades by publicly funded institutions, and are indexed by expert cataloguers and curators following often elaborate and standardized cataloguing frameworks and controlled vocabularies. Essentially the content contributed by data providers to Europeana can be qualified as both authentic and authoritative. However, the extent of Europeana's success will depend on the kinds of creative interactions with the authentic and authoritative content the service facilitates. As stated by Clay Shirky, media scholar, "public reuse produces a kind of value that doesn't just come from publication. It comes from republication and reuse." Access to the growing corpus of digitized objects is a precondition that will unleash the full potential of Europeana. It is vital to transform the Europeana service from a being relatively passive, searchable repository into a dynamic, interactive service, where users will come to realise that they will be discovering a wide variety of content which interests them as they return to the evolving content time and time again.

To this end, Europeana already incorporated several mechanisms, such a social tagging and cross-overs to social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. In the near future, Europeana will also invite its users to contribute their own content and will link to information from outside sources such as Wikipedia.

Effectively managed, content and metadata contributed by end users constitute critical contributions that are highly valuable to the European cultural record:

- Contextualisation. Content that can complement, enrich and support interpretation of the compilation of authentic and authoritative content currently being aggregated for, and by Europeana. User contributions can provide access to the real-life experiences, and articulates the voices of ordinary people within the overall context of European history, and contemporary life
- Curation. Users can make unexpected connections between records and create thematic groupings
- Multilinguality. Contributions by end users enhance the multilinguality of the content by encouraging them to tag the content folksonomically in their natural language

From the perspective of students, researchers and learners of all kinds, these kinds of personalized content will be highly valuable as well greatly augmenting the Europeana's content itself as it explores innovative channels for re-use.

2. TYPES OF USER CONTRIBUTIONS

'Crowdsourcing' (harnessing the power of many) has been already proved effective in the cultural heritage domain, with platforms such as Flickr the Commons and steve.museum drawing on 'the crowd' to enrich content. Successful approaches to aggregating this kind of user contributed content have also been initiated in the context of submission campaigns related to episodes and milestones in European history such as the two World Wars , and the post-1989 transition in Eastern Europe , thematic narratives linking rich literary resources, and visual culture. They hold a rich potential for enhancing thematic treatment within Europeana. Accordingly, end user contributions can result not only in more diverse content becoming available through Europeana but also for facilitating an open channel for user participation and distribute creativity in the online, European community.

Europeana distinguishes between four types of user contributions:

1.   Metadata. Supporting end-user annotations on Europeana will be highly beneficial for both visitors of the portal, as user generated tags increase intuitive access to content, and institutions while at the same time users can enrich their own catalogue with novel content contributed by the European-wide user base across portal. These annotations can also be used to support multilingual access to the content in Europeana. Special attention will need to be given how to assess the quality of tags in a challenging multilingual environment as Europeana, supporting 26 languages.

2.   Stories. User contributed stories/narratives can be a starting point for exploring the interconnections between items discovered in Europeana based on intersecting time/space/topic components . Although digital stories can manifest in different ways, they share a set of characteristics which makes them ideal for the purpose of communicating cultural heritage to audiences who may find it difficult - or boring - to access content via passive channels such as search engines or catalogues. Such digital stories are rapidly becoming globally acknowledged as powerful tools for learning, integration, and preservation by providing unique platforms for creativity in the cultural sphere. Stories act to transfer knowledge from previous generations and help to uncover ethnic heritage emanating from different regions and locations in the culturally rich and diverse tapestry of Europe.

3.   Digital objects. User contributions drawn from personal memory may result in submissions of digital objects in their possession, including photographs and other memorabilia, commentaries and annotations. Content may be solicited in the context of stories, but Europeana can also display these objects in other contexts. It is important to note that digital objects from end-users can also be provided via data providers (i.e. not directly

through the Europeana portal) and entities such as Wikimedia Commons.

4.   Specific datasets from the Linked Open Data project. The Linked Open Data project currently includes over 100 different datasets, known as the LOD cloud, ranging from rather centralized ones, such as DBpedia, a structured version of Wikipedia, to the distributed clouds (datasets). It is an extremely rich dataset than can be used to add meaning to objects on Europeana. The current LOD cloud contains data from diverse domains such as people, companies, books, scientific publications, films, music, television and radio programs, genes, online communities, statistical or scientific data. Europeana will critically assess the datasets it would like to

3. HOW USER CONTRIBUTED CONTENT WILL BE USED IN EUROPEANA

3.1. Presentation layers

When making available user contributions, Europeana will ensure that the presentation layers differentiate very clearly between end user contributions and content contributed by institutions. Also, it will be possible for users to 'hide' contributions made by other users.

3.2. Terms of use and licensing

Users wishing to contribute metadata, stories or digital objects to Europeana need to first register. As part of the registration process users will be asked to agree to the Europeana Terms of Use which - among other things - establishes how metadata, stories or digital objects contributed to Europeana will be used by Europeana, Europeana's institutional partners, and other users of Europeana. As users upload content to Europeana they do so to share their content not only with Europeana but also with its Users and Partners.

For content that is protected by copyright, neighbouring rights or other rights this means that the user needs to own sufficient rights in order to make content available via Europeana. In addition the user needs to give Europeana, its users, and partners sufficient rights to access, redistribute and re-arrange the content being contributed to Europeana.

By contributing content to Europeana users agree that their content can be used by Europeana without any restrictions and without the ability to remove the content from Europeana once it has been contributed. In the case of stories annotations & digital objects Europeana will attribute the contributing user as he or she described themselves in the registration process. When users contribute tags, keywords or other descriptive data this is not the case.

By contributing content to Europeana users also allow all other users of Europeana (including Europeana's partners and sponsors) to use and augment the contributed content as long as they adhere to the conditions of a Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike license. This license allows anyone

- To copy, distribute and transmit the work
- To make adoptions of the work and to distribute these adoptions

   as long as the following conditions are met:

- Other users must attribute the original author or rights-holder of the work

- When adaptations of the work are distributed these may only be distributed under the same license.

Licensing all user contributions to Europeana under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution Share Alike license ensures that the content contributed to Europeana by end users can be re-used by other end-users, Europeana's institutional partners and other online platforms such as Wikipedia. This also enables Europeana to make available user contributions as linked data and combine it with content provided by other platforms such as Wikipedia.

The following illustration indicates the structure: Europeana can use the contributed content under the terms of use. Data providers and other third parties (including end users) can use and redistribute the contributed content under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution ShareAlike license. The user contributing the content remains free to use the content without any restrictions.
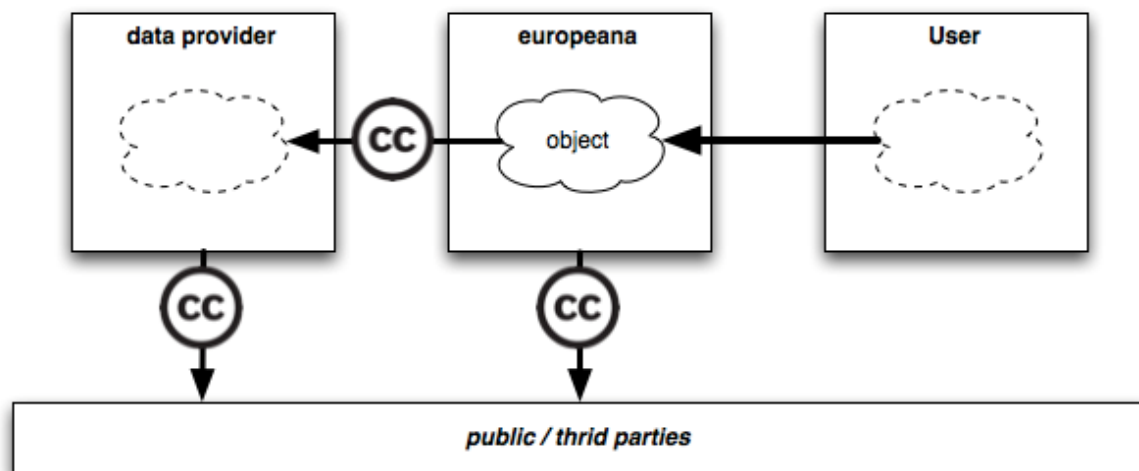
3.3 Responsibilities of users contributing content to Europeana

Europeana acknowledges that including content contributed by individual end users also poses challenges in terms of accuracy, ethics, tone of voice and so on. Therefore, a set of responsibilities has been defined.

Before users can contribute content to Europeana, users will need to agree to Europeana's terms of service. These terms of service establish a number of key responsibilities that users need to be aware of:
- Users are only allowed to contribute content and data to Europeana that contributes to overall Europeana's objective: Europeana provides information about and access to Europe's cultural heritage and user contributions must be related to this objective.

- Users need to ensure that they have sufficient rights to contribute content to Europeana. This means that they either need to be the copyright holder of the content they are uploading, need to have obtained sufficient permission by the original copyright holder to do so, or declare that the content is public domain.
- Users are not allowed to upload content that is racist, discriminatory, pornographic, that may be deemed to be insulting to other users, or groups of people. They are also not allowed to upload content that is damaging to the reputation of Europeana or its partners and contributors.

If a user fails to meet these requirements (see the Europeana Terms of Use for a complete list of restrictions) the contributed content can be removed by Europeana and the user account of a user can be suspended.

Please note that this policy, including the responsibilities listed above, is subject to ongoing assessment.